DC
SPECIAL GUEST STARS:
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
AND
THE NEW TEEN TITANS
STARRING IN
SUPERMAN
ACTION COMICS
ALL NEW!
60¢
NO. 546
AUG.
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
"SHOWDOWN!"
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ROCKETED AS A BABY FROM THE EXPLODING PLANET KRYPTON, KAL-EL GREW TO MANHOOD ON EARTH--WHOSE YELLOW SUN AND LIGHTER GRAVITY GAVE HIM FANTASTIC SUPER-POWERS! IN THE CITY OF METROPOLIS, HE POSES AS MILD-MANNERED NEWSMAN CLARK KENT--BUT BATTLES EVIL ALL OVER EARTH--AND BEYOND--AS...

SUPERMAN

Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

MARV WOLFMAN WRITER • GIL KANE ARTIST • BEN ODA GENE D'ANGELO LETTERER COLORIST • JULIUS SCHWARTZ EDITOR

SHOWDOWN!

AN OMNIPRESENT SILENCE PERVADES THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE, A SILENCE SO RESOUNDING IT ALMOST ANGERS AN ALREADY ANNOYED MAN OF STEEL...

NOTHING SEEMS TO WORK!

I'M TIRED OF FEEDING THE SUPER-COMPUTER INFORMATION ON THE NEW BRAINIAC--

--ONLY TO HAVE IT TELL ME IT STILL DOESN'T KNOW ENOUGH TO FULLY ANALYZE HIM.

IF I KNEW MORE ABOUT HIM, I WOULDN'T NEED THIS--THING FOR HELP.

INSUFFICIENT DATA

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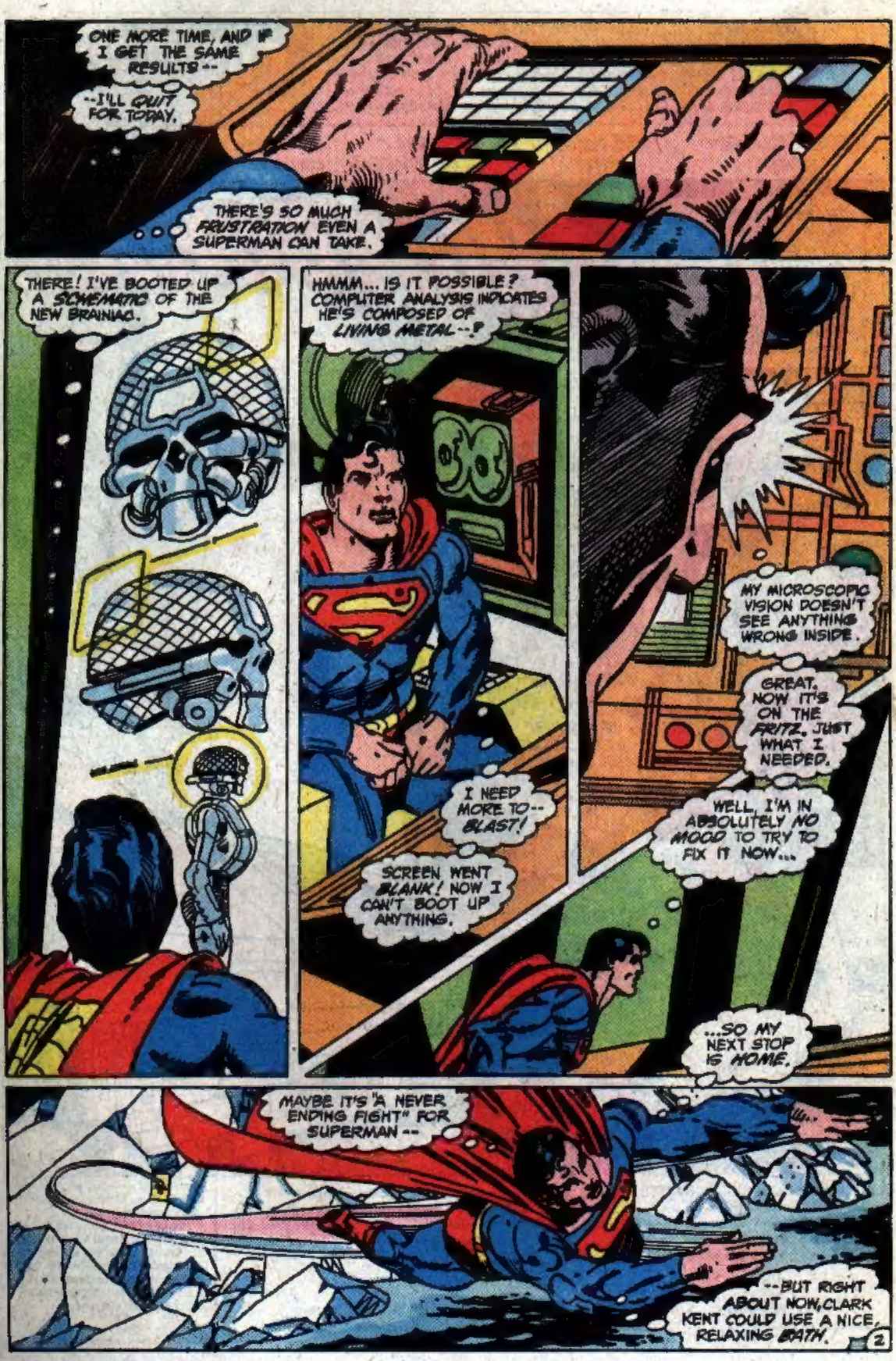
ONE MORE TIME, AND IF I GET THE SAME RESULTS--
--I'LL QUIT FOR TODAY.
THERE'S SO MUCH FRUSTRATION EVEN A SUPERMAN CAN TAKE.
THERE! I'VE BOOTED UP A SCHEMATIC OF THE NEW BRAINIAC.
HMMM... IS IT POSSIBLE? COMPUTER ANALYSIS INDICATES HE'S COMPOSED OF LIVING METAL--?
I NEED MORE TO-- BLAST!
SCREEN WENT BLANK! NOW I CAN'T BOOT UP ANYTHING.
MY MICROSCOPIC VISION DOESN'T SEE ANYTHING WRONG INSIDE.
GREAT. NOW IT'S ON THE FRITZ. JUST WHAT I NEEDED.
WELL, I'M IN ABSOLUTELY NO MOOD TO TRY TO FIX IT NOW...
...SO MY NEXT STOP IS HOME.
MAYBE IT'S "A NEVER ENDING FIGHT" FOR SUPERMAN--
--BUT RIGHT ABOUT NOW, CLARK KENT COULD USE A NICE, RELAXING BATH.

FUNNY HOW I'M BEGINNING TO ENJOY BEING CLARK MORE AND MORE THESE DAYS.
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE MY WORK AS A SUPERMAN SEEMS TO BE GETTING TOUGHER.
THE NEW BRAINIAC IS FAR MORE DEADLY THAN HIS ORIGINAL COUNTERPART...
...AND I'M IN A WAR OF NERVES WITH VANDAL SAVAGE... ONE THAT'S BEGINNING TO ANNOY MY OWN.
SOMETIMES I LONG FOR THE DAYS WHEN MY BIGGEST CONCERNS WERE HOW TO PLUG UP AN ACTIVE VOLCANO.
BLIZZK
DOORBELL. X-RAY VISION PICKS UP JIMMY OLSEN.
I LOVE HIM LIKE A YOUNGER BROTHER, BUT WHY IS HE BOTHERING ME NOW?
HI, JIM. WHAT'S UP?
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, CLARK? MORGAN EDGE IS READY TO TEAR YOUR HIDE IN TWO!
OH? NOW WHAT'S BOTHERING OUR FRIENDLY "SMILING COBRA"?
LANA'S ABOUT TO GO ON WORLD-WIDE NEWS WITH HER LIVE MID-EAST INTERVIEWS.
AND EDGE WANTS YOU COVERING THE DESK AT HOME. C'MON.

HE WAS REALLY MAD. HE SAID YOU'RE NEVER AROUND WHEN HE NEEDS YOU.
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
NAH. I'VE JUST BEEN ... BUSY. UH.. TAXI!
YOU SHOULDN'T TAKE OFF WHEN YOU'VE GOT A BROADCAST.
EDGE LET STEVE LOMBARD GO. HE COULD FIRE YOU, TOO.
TO TELL THE TRUTH, IT WOULDN'T BREAK MY HEART.
AND AT THE GALAXY BUILDING...
WHERE IN BLAZES HAVE YOU BEEN?
I HAD SOMETHING PERSONAL TO DO, MR. EDGE.
I'M NOT PAYING YOU TO PULL A CHESHIRE CAT ON ME.
SOMETHING PERSONAL? AND THAT KEPT YOU FROM WORK?
MISTER, GET DOWN TO THE STUDIO--OR DON'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE WITH THAT SALARY I'M PAYING YOU.
FIRST, DON'T STICK YOUR FINGER IN MY FACE! I DON'T LIKE IT!
SECOND, DON'T THREATEN ME! I LIKE THAT EVEN LESS!
THIRD-- GOODBYE! I HAVE SOMETHING ELSE TO DO!
GET BACK HERE, KENT, OR I'LL HAVE YOU COVERING LITTLE LEAGUE STORIES FOR THE REST OF YOUR--KENT!
MR. EDGE, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
DO? UHH... YOU'RE ON, KID. DO IT!
4
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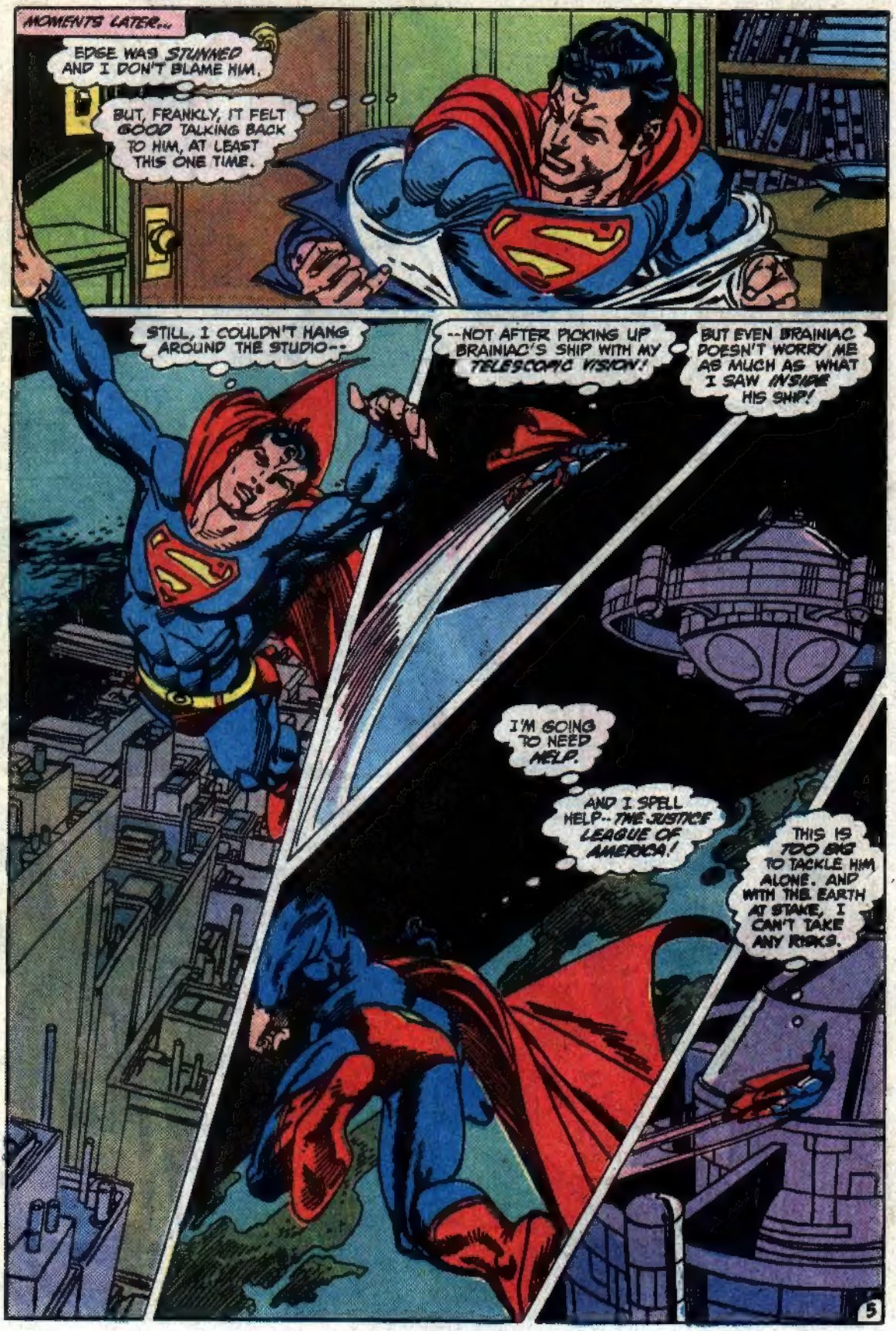

MOMENTS LATER...
EDGE WAS STUNNED AND I DON'T BLAME HIM.
BUT, FRANKLY, IT FELT GOOD TALKING BACK TO HIM, AT LEAST THIS ONE TIME.
STILL, I COULDN'T HANG AROUND THE STUDIO--
--NOT AFTER PICKING UP BRAINIAC'S SHIP WITH MY TELESCOPIC VISION!
BUT EVEN BRAINIAC DOESN'T WORRY ME AS MUCH AS WHAT I SAW INSIDE HIS SHIP!
I'M GOING TO NEED HELP.
AND I SPELL HELP--THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA!
THIS IS TOO BIG TO TACKLE HIM ALONE. AND WITH THE EARTH AT STAKE, I CAN'T TAKE ANY RISKS.
5

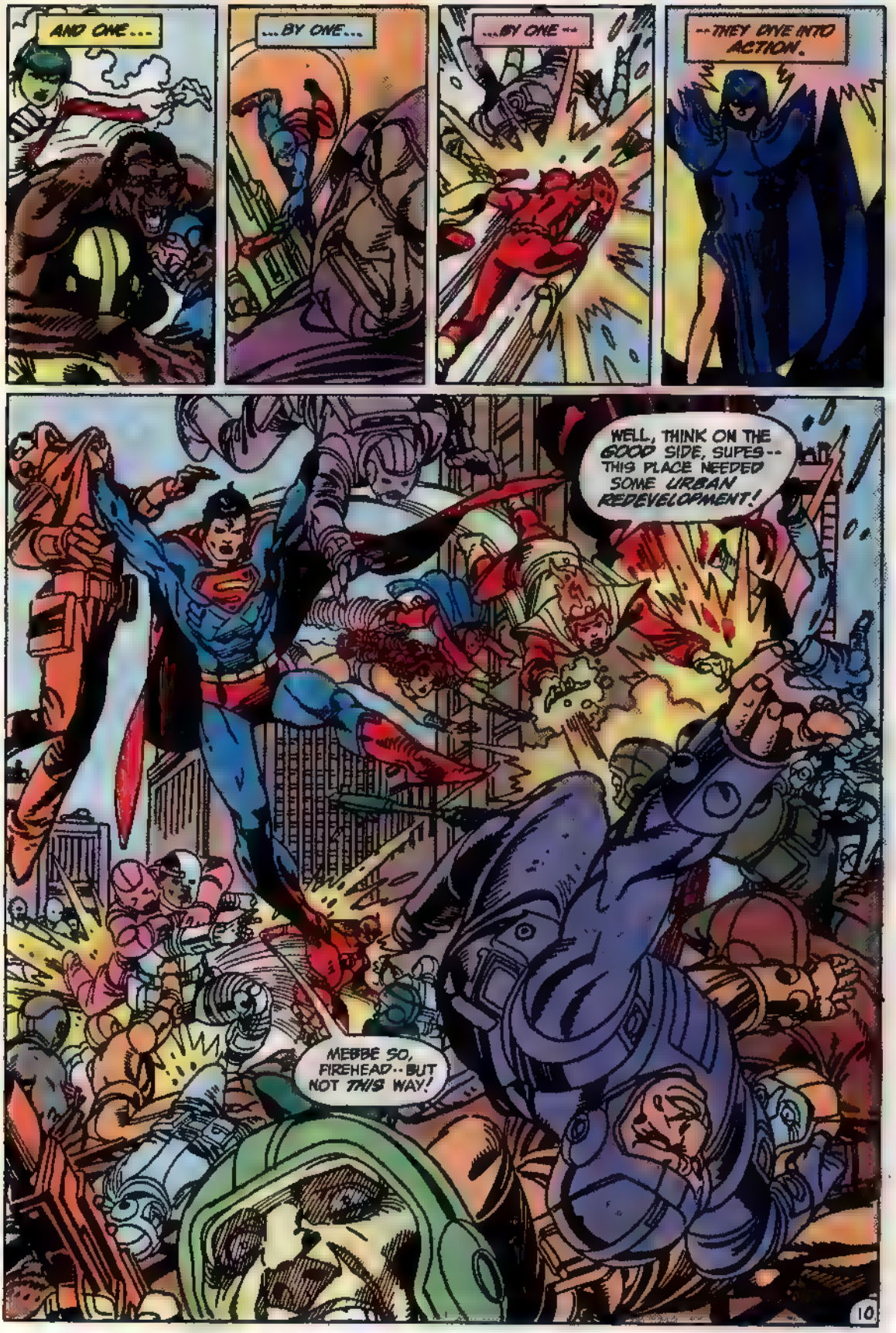
INSIDE THE ORBITTING SATELLITE...
...YOU SEE MY PROBLEM, BARRY? I WANT TO BE A TITAN.
BUT I REALLY THINK I SHOULD GO BACK TO SCHOOL.
YOU'RE ASKING A SCIENTIST. OF COURSE I'D SAY STICK TO SCHOOL.
BUT, WALLY, YOU'VE GOT TO DO WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU!
YEAH, I GUESS IT COMES DOWN TO THAT, DOESN'T IT?
BARRY, KID FLASH... I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU BOTH HERE.
SUPERMAN?
WHAT'S UP? SOMETHING'S WRONG?
CALL THE OTHER MEMBERS. WE'LL NEED THEM.
COULD YOU USE THE TITANS?
I'D USE BOZO THE CLOWN IF HE'D HELP.
AND SHORTLY, AT THE NEW YORK HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE NEW TEEN TITANS...
WHAT'S THE SCOOP, WONDY? FLEET-FEET HAVING TROUBLE ON HIS HISTORY FINALS?
WE GOT YOU, KID FLASH.
SET THE JLA TRANSPORTER BEAM AND WE'LL BE RIGHT UP.
CYBORG, I WISH IT WERE ONLY THAT SIMPLE! LET'S GO!
6

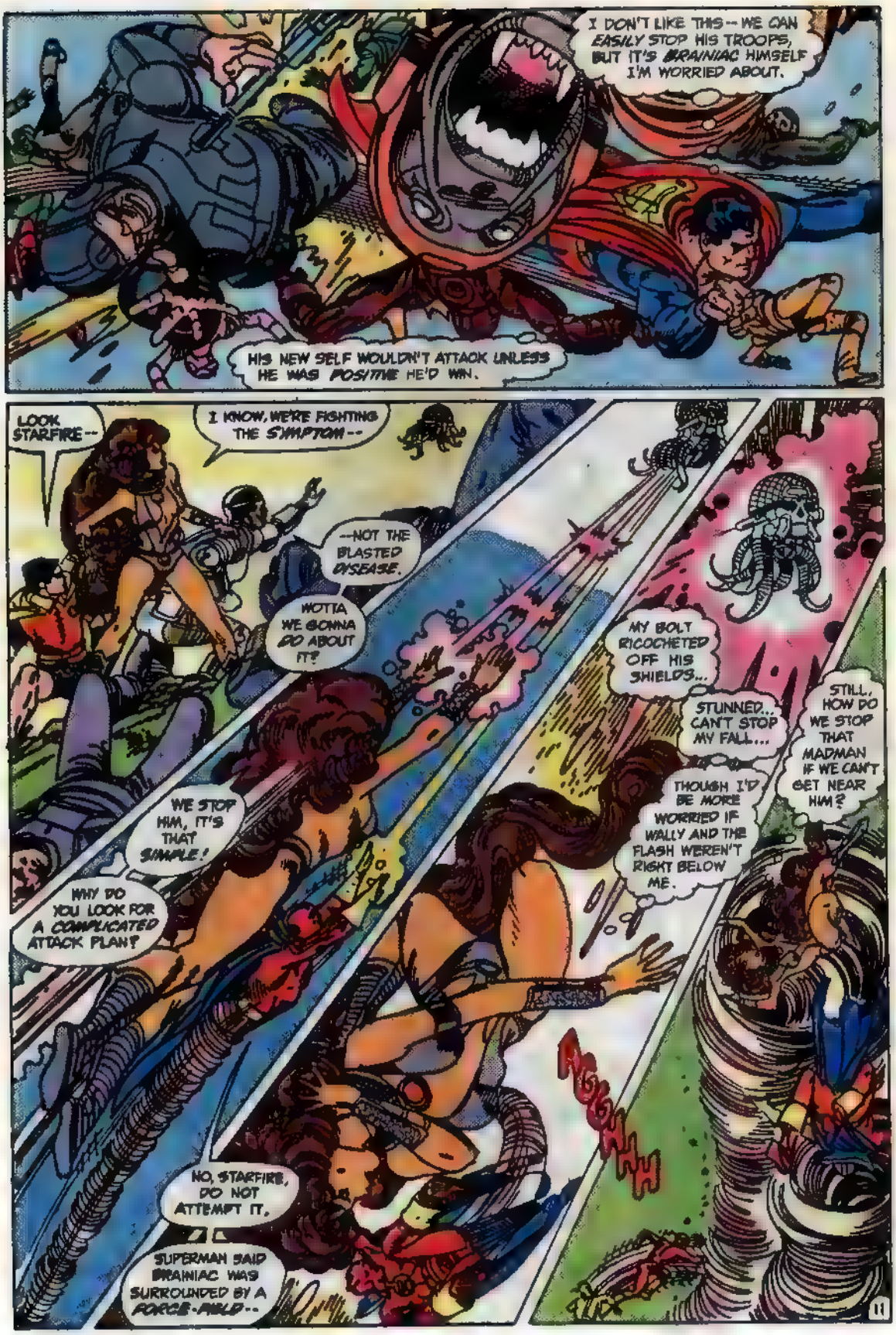
AND SEVERAL MINUTES LATER COMES THE MEETING OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES...
RAVEN, IT'S GOOD SEEING YOU. LAST TIME WE MET YOU WERE IN TROUBLE.
ARE THINGS ANY BETTER?
I AM FINE, ZATANNA...
YEAH, WOTTA YOU LOOKIN' AT, ASHHEAD?
CONGRATULATIONS, SIS-- I HEARD YOU WERE GETTING MARRIED.
ARE YOU ALWAYS SO FRIENDLY, OR DID I CATCH YOU ON A GOOD DAY?
I LOVE HIM... HE'S REALLY THE RIGHT MAN FOR ME.
... I FIRMLY BELIEVE IN EDUCATION...
7

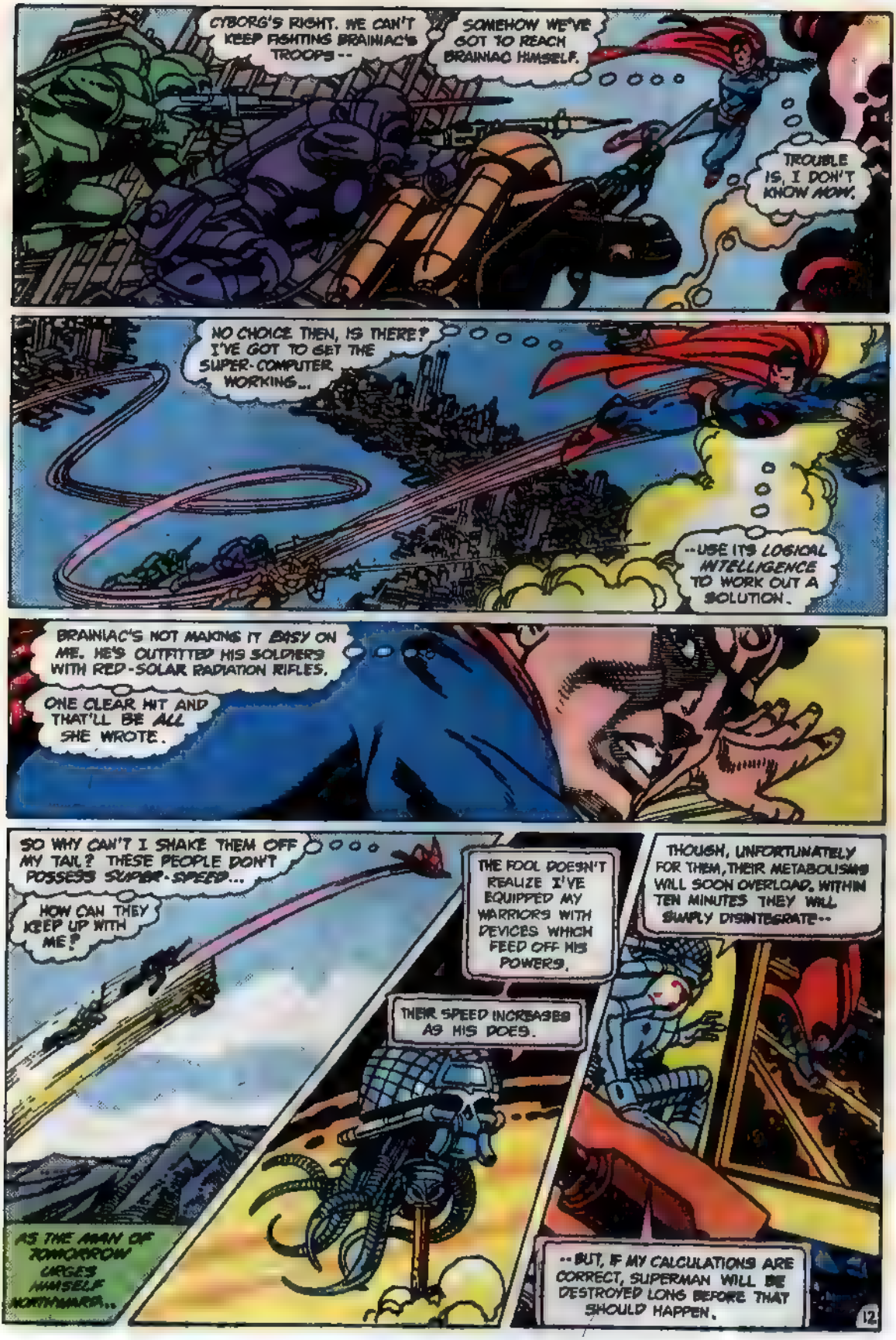
SHORTLY...
SUPERMAN, BRAINIAC ONCE INVADED THE VEGAN SYSTEM--
--BUT THE CITADEL DROVE HIM OUT. IF THOSE BUFFOONS COULD DO IT, WHY CAN'T YOU?
I ONLY WISH IT WERE THAT SIMPLE, STARFIRE...
WE'RE DEALING WITH A NEW BRAINIAC -- FAR MORE DEADLY THAN HIS ORIGINAL SELF.
I'M NOT EVEN SURE IF WE HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO STOP HIM.
WELL, FELLAS, WE'RE GONNA FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH.
TAKE A LOOK AT THE VIEW SCREEN!
THE OLD BRAINIAC WAS A VILLAIN, TRUE -- BUT HE SELDOM KILLED. THIS ONE WOULD LEVEL THE ENTIRE PLANET IF HE HAD THE CHANCE.
THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?
LET'S GO!
8

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

THE JLA TRANSPORTER HUMS WITH LIFE, SHIFTING ALMOST A SCORE OF HEROES FROM DEEP SPACE...
...TO THE WAR-RIDDEN STREETS OF NEW YORK CITY...
THIS, THEN, IS THE COMBINED POWER OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA AND THE NEW TEEN TITANS...
AND NO GREATER FIGHTING FORCE HAS EVER BEEN ASSEMBLED.
THESE SOLDIERS ARE BEING CONTROLLED BY BRAINIAC...
...BUT FOR ONCE WE CAN'T WORRY ABOUT THEIR GUILT OR INNOCENCE!
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE'VE GOT TO STOP THEM!
9


AND ONE...
...BY ONE...
...BY ONE --
--THEY DIVE INTO ACTION.
WELL, THINK ON THE GOOD SIDE, SUPES-- THIS PLACE NEEDED SOME URBAN REDEVELOPMENT!
MEBBE SO, FIREHEAD--BUT NOT THIS WAY!


I DON'T LIKE THIS -- WE CAN EASILY STOP HIS TROOPS, BUT IT'S BRAINIAC HIMSELF I'M WORRIED ABOUT.
HIS NEW SELF WOULDN'T ATTACK UNLESS HE WAS POSITIVE HE'D WIN.
LOOK, STARFIRE --
I KNOW, WE'RE FIGHTING THE SYMPTOM --
--NOT THE BLASTED DISEASE.
WOTTA WE GONNA DO ABOUT IT?
WE STOP HIM, IT'S THAT SIMPLE!
WHY DO YOU LOOK FOR A COMPLICATED ATTACK PLAN?
NO, STARFIRE, DO NOT ATTEMPT IT.
SUPERMAN SAID BRAINIAC WAS SURROUNDED BY A FORCE-FIELD --
MY BOLT RICOCHETED OFF HIS SHIELDS...
STUNNED... CAN'T STOP MY FALL...
THOUGH I'D BE MORE WORRIED IF WALLY AND THE FLASH WEREN'T RIGHT BELOW ME.
RUSHHH
STILL, HOW DO WE STOP THAT MADMAN IF WE CAN'T GET NEAR HIM?
11

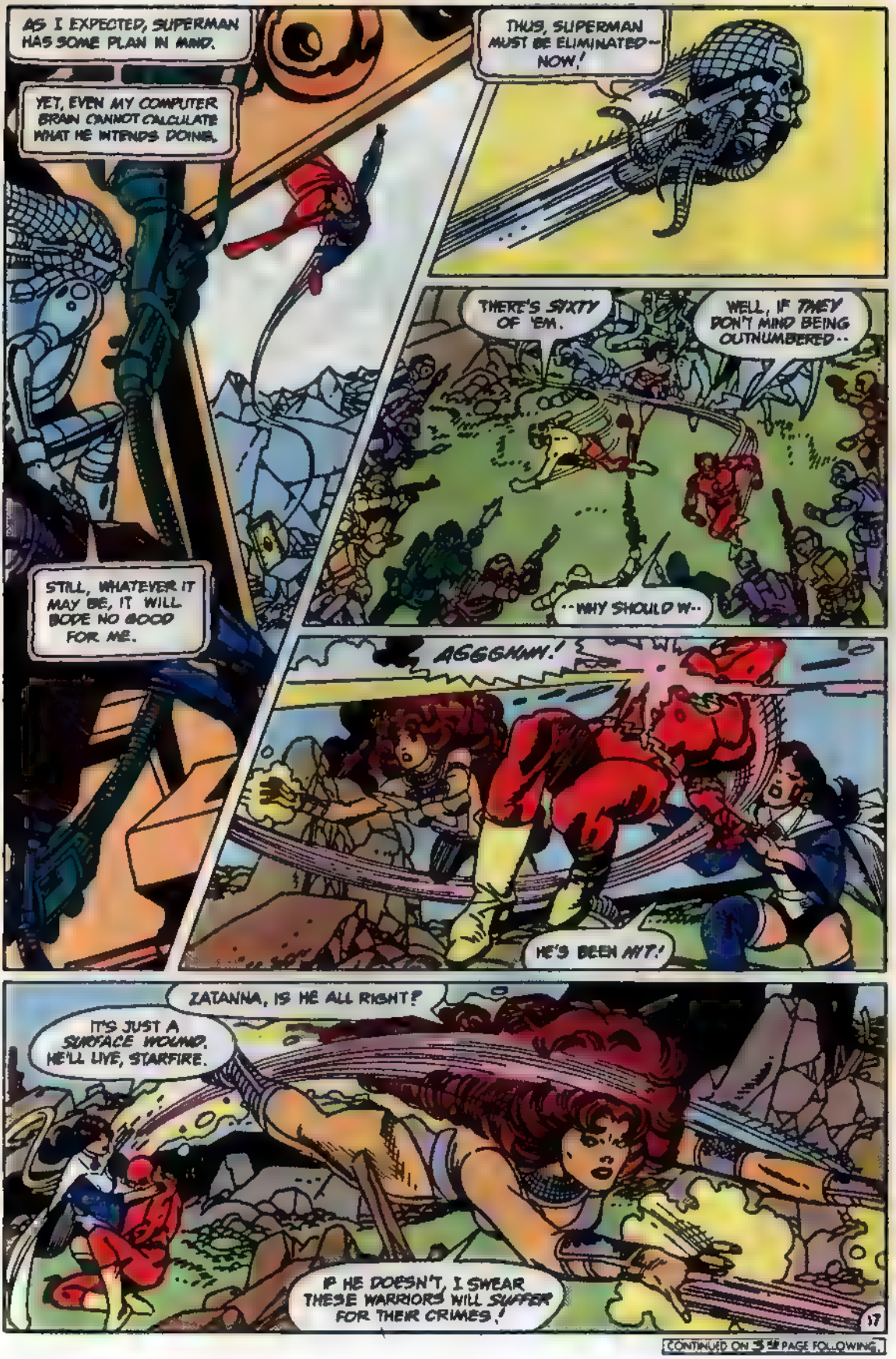

CYBORG'S RIGHT. WE CAN'T KEEP FIGHTING BRAINIAC'S TROOPS --
SOMEHOW WE'VE GOT TO REACH BRAINIAC HIMSELF.
TROUBLE IS, I DON'T KNOW HOW.
NO CHOICE THEN, IS THERE? I'VE GOT TO GET THE SUPER-COMPUTER WORKING...
--USE ITS LOGICAL INTELLIGENCE TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION.
BRAINIAC'S NOT MAKING IT EASY ON ME. HE'S OUTFITTED HIS SOLDIERS WITH RED-SOLAR RADIATION RIFLES.
ONE CLEAR HIT AND THAT'LL BE ALL SHE WROTE.
SO WHY CAN'T I SHAKE THEM OFF MY TAIL? THESE PEOPLE DON'T POSSESS SUPER-SPEED...
HOW CAN THEY KEEP UP WITH ME?
THE FOOL DOESN'T REALIZE I'VE EQUIPPED MY WARRIORS WITH DEVICES WHICH FEED OFF HIS POWERS.
THEIR SPEED INCREASES AS HIS DOES.
THOUGH, UNFORTUNATELY FOR THEM, THEIR METABOLISMS WILL SOON OVERLOAD. WITHIN TEN MINUTES THEY WILL SIMPLY DISINTEGRATE--
AS THE MAN OF TOMORROW LARGES HIMSELF NORTHWARD...
--BUT, IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT, SUPERMAN WILL BE DESTROYED LONG BEFORE THAT SHOULD HAPPEN.

LET'S FIGURE THIS OUT LOGICALLY. PROBLEM ONE: I CAN'T OUTRACE 'EM.
IN FACT, THEY SEEM TO BE GAINING ON ME.
WELL, IF I CAN'T LOSE 'EM WITH MY SUPER-SPEED...
...MAYBE I CAN BAFFLE THEM WITH SOME FANCY FOOTWORK.
OR MAYBE I SHOULD SAY FISTWORK.
NOT SHABBY. HOW MANY OTHER EXTRA-TERRESTIALS CAN PUNCH THEIR WAY THROUGH A MOUNTAIN?
AND SINCE THE MOLE I LEFT ISN'T LARGE ENOUGH FOR THOSE STAR WARS REJECTS TO SLIP THROUGH--
--LET'S SEE HOW THEY HANDLE THEIR -- HUH?
THEY'RE BURNING UP?
MY GOD-- DID I DO THAT?
NO... NO... IT CAN'T BE ME.
SUPER-SPEED ALONE COULDN'T CAUSE THAT.
IT'S GOT TO HAVE BEEN BRAINIAC. IT MUST BE HIS DOING!
ONCE MORE HE'S ESCAPED ME. WELL, OLD FOE, MY PATIENCE IS LIMITED.
IF I AM TO ONE DAY DESTROY THE MASTER PROGAMMER AND RULE THIS UNIVERSE--
--YOU, HIS ANGEL OF DEATH -- MUST PERISH.

THE ACRID STENCH OF DEATH IS UNKNOWN HERE IN PITTSDALE, HOME OF SAM AND ELLA LANE...
IN THIS FERTILE VALLEY, LIFE IS EVERYWHERE, AND WITH THE GOOD LIFE, USUALLY COMES JOY.
USUALLY, BUT NOT ALWAYS...
HURRY UP LOIS, WILL YOU, SAM?
THAT GIRL SHE MENTIONED IS ON THE TELEVISION!
HONEY, C'MON DOWN-- SOMETHING YOU OUGHTA SEE.
REALLY, DAD, I JUST WANTED TO REST. I'M REALLY--
WHAT?!
THE SNEAKY, SNIVELING, CONNIVING WITCH!
FIRST, ALI KYAMM AND PRIME MINISTER BEN-DAVID, THE FREE WORLD THANKS YOU FOR HAVING THE COURAGE TO PARTAKE IN THIS FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW.
NOW, THE FIRST QUESTION...
SH-SHE GOT MY SCOOP! I--I SET IT ALL UP! I DID IT! I DID EVERYTHING--
NOW SHE'LL GET ALL THE CREDIT!
THAT MISERABLE WITCH!
IT'S SUPERMAN'S FAULT! HE TOOK ME AWAY FROM THERE SO THAT... THAT WITCH COULD GET MY STORY!
HONEY..
14

BRAINIAC HAD TO KNOW THOSE MEN WOULD DIE -- BUT HE PROBABLY EXPECTED THEY'D DESTROY ME FIRST.
HE'S ONE OF MY OLDEST FOES AND SUDDENLY I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT HIM...
...ONLY THAT HE'S COLD... MERCILESS... AND WILLING TO DESTROY ANYTHING THAT STANDS IN HIS WAY!
RAO, PLEASE GIVE ME THE POWER TO DISMANTLE HIM BEFORE ANOTHER SOUL HAS TO DIE.
NO GOOD. THE SUPER-COMPUTER'S STILL OUT.
HMMM. MY MICROSCOPIC VISION'S PICKING UP AN ELECTRO-MAGNETIC ANOMOLY...
WAIT A SECOND! THIS HAS HAPPENED BEFORE... WHEN SUNSPOT ACTIVITY IS AT ITS WORST!
COME TO THINK OF IT, YESTERDAY, WHEN HE FIRED THOSE RED-SUN TORPEDOES AT ME, I DOVE INTO THE SUN TO GET RID OF THEM.*
THEY MUST'VE EXPLODED... SOMEHOW SHIFTED THE SUN'S HEAT PATTERNS.
SUNSPOTS ARE RELATIVELY COLD AREAS OF THE SUN... THEY PLAY HAVOC WITH TV AND RADIO RECEPTION...
*Last issue -- Julie
--AND THEY CAN EFFECT COMPUTERS... SUCH AS MY SUPER-COMPUTER...
--OR EVEN A LIVING COMPUTER LIKE BRAINIAC!
NOW I KNOW WHAT TO DO!
15

THERE'S TOO MANY OF THEM FOR US TO BE EFFECTIVE.
THE BEST WE'RE DOING IS FIGHTING A STALEMATE--
--WHILE BRAINIAC'S WEAPON'S ARE FREE TO DESTROY ANYTHING HE WANTS.
WE NEED HELP HERE--SOMEONE!
NO SOONER SAID THAN DONE, BEAK-BRAINS
BEFORE THOSE PEOPLE FALL TO THE GROUND...
...I'LL JUST COMMAND SOME GROUND TO ZOOM UP TO CATCH 'EM.
YEAH, I SEE THE FALLING PEOPLE YOU DON'T HAFTA TELL ME WHAT TO DO.
JUST A LITTLE ATOMIC SHIFTING AND THEY'LL BECOME HARMLESS MARSHMALLOWS
NOT BAD IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.
NOT THAT I WANNA WASTE MY LIFE PLAYIN' THE HERO.
HEY, FIRE-HEAD, YOUR TURN.
16


AS I EXPECTED, SUPERMAN HAS SOME PLAN IN MIND.
YET, EVEN MY COMPUTER BRAIN CANNOT CALCULATE WHAT HE INTENDS DOING.
STILL, WHATEVER IT MAY BE, IT WILL BODE NO GOOD FOR ME.
THUS, SUPERMAN MUST BE ELIMINATED-- NOW!
THERE'S SIXTY OF 'EM.
WELL, IF THEY DON'T MIND BEING OUTNUMBERED--
--WHY SHOULD W--
AGGGHHH!
HE'S BEEN HIT!
ZATANNA, IS HE ALL RIGHT?
IT'S JUST A SURFACE WOUND. HE'LL LIVE, STARFIRE.
IF HE DOESN'T, I SWEAR THESE WARRIORS WILL SUFFER FOR THEIR CRIMES!
17
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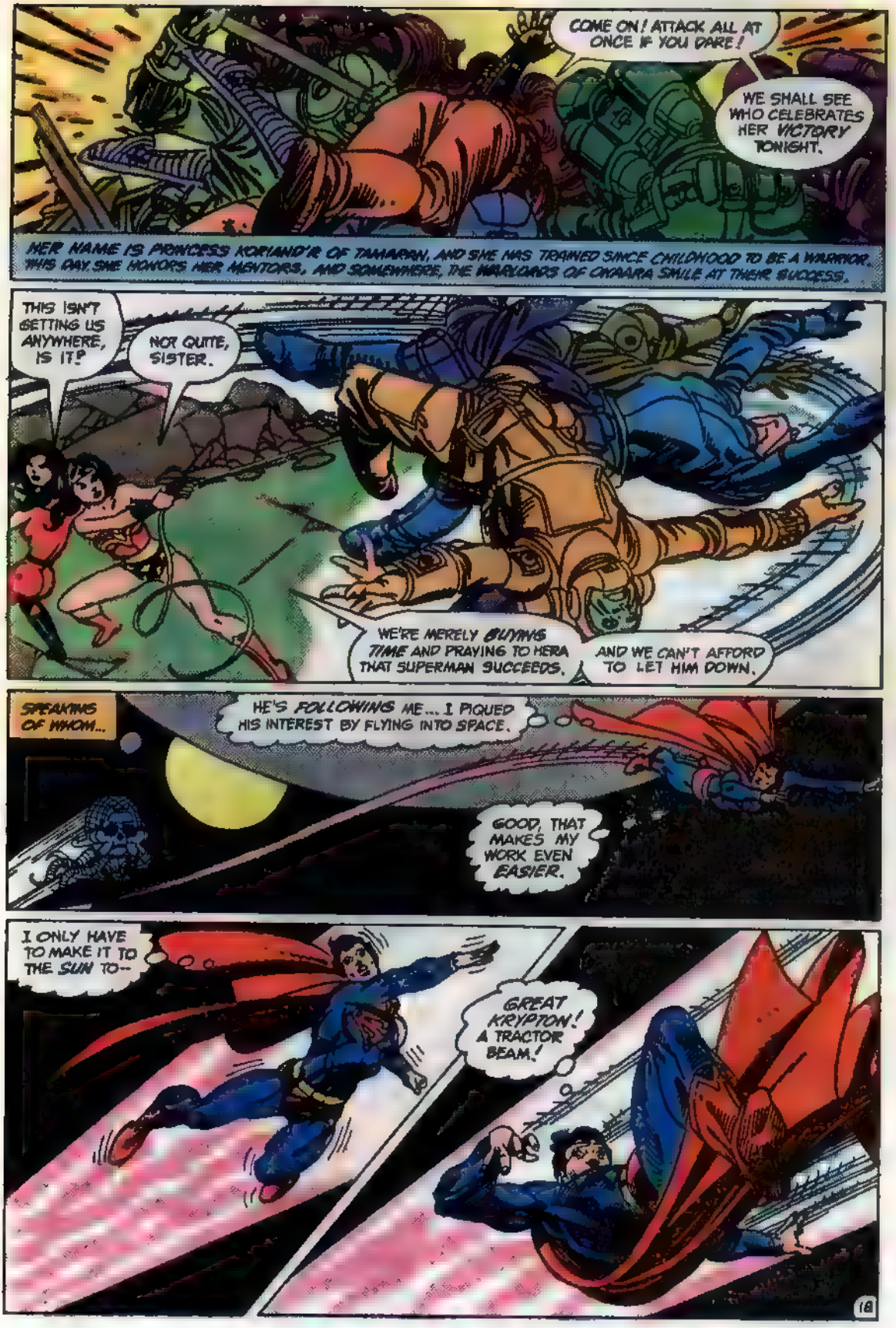
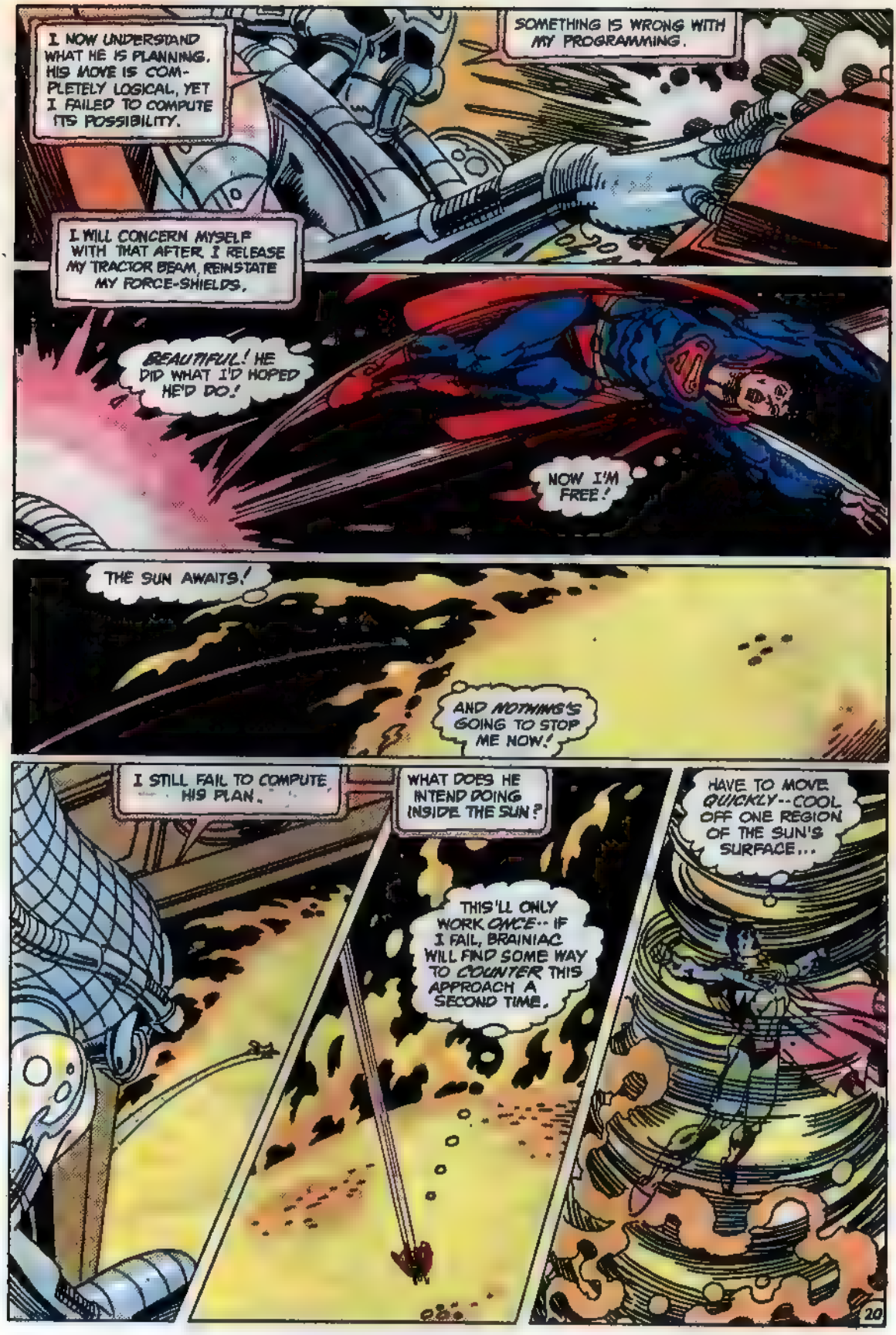
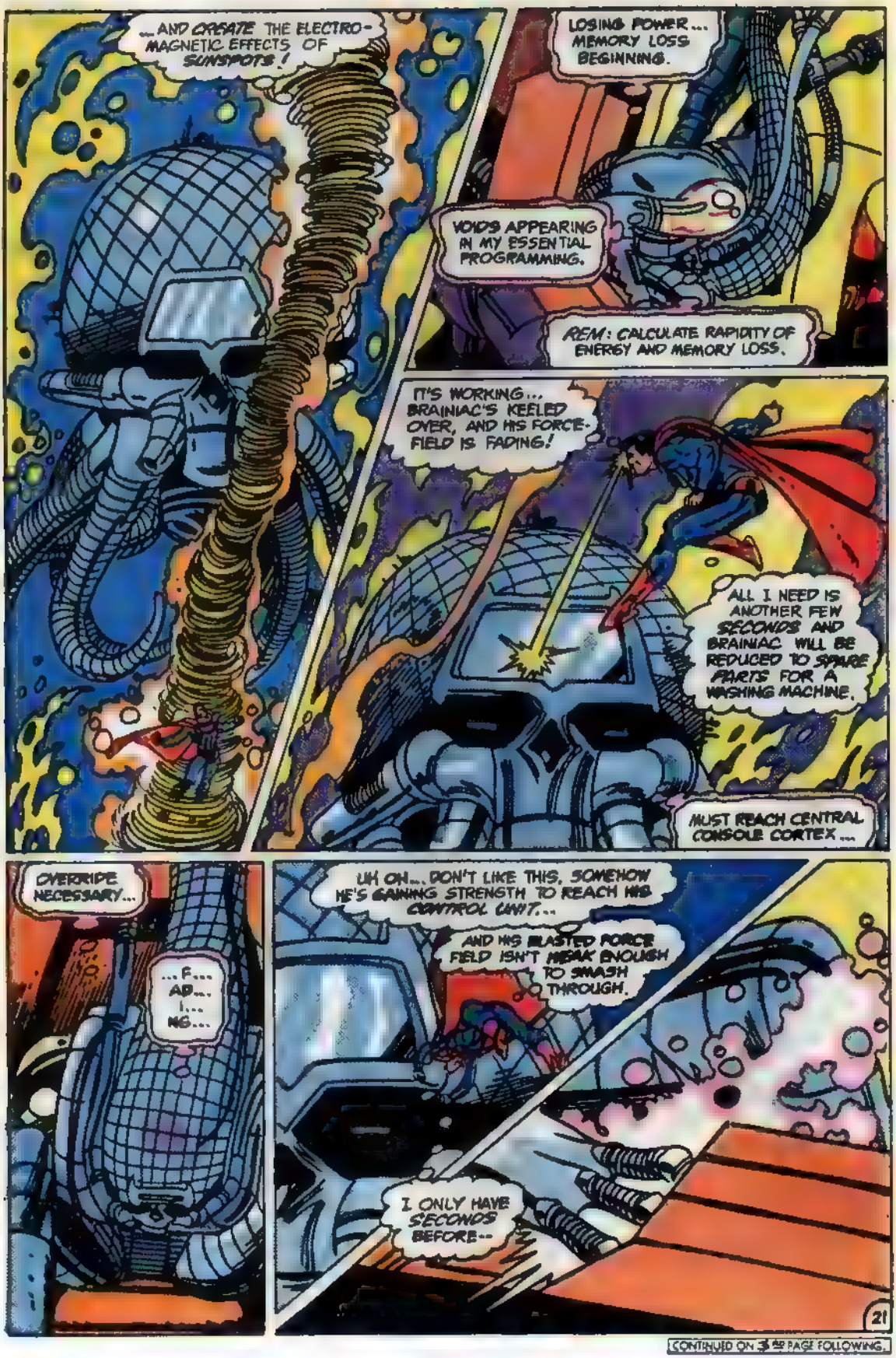

COME ON! ATTACK ALL AT ONCE IF YOU DARE!
WE SHALL SEE WHO CELEBRATES HER VICTORY TONIGHT.
HER NAME IS PRINCESS KORIAND'R OF TAMARAN, AND SHE HAS TRAINED SINCE CHILDHOOD TO BE A WARRIOR. THIS DAY SHE HONORS HER MENTORS, AND SOMEWHERE, THE WARLORDS OF OKAARA SMILE AT THEIR SUCCESS.
THIS ISN'T GETTING US ANYWHERE, IS IT?
NOT QUITE, SISTER.
WE'RE MERELY BUYING TIME AND PRAYING TO HERA THAT SUPERMAN SUCCEEDS.
AND WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LET HIM DOWN.
SPEAKING OF HIM...
HE'S FOLLOWING ME... I PIQUED HIS INTEREST BY FLYING INTO SPACE.
GOOD, THAT MAKES MY WORK EVEN EASIER.
I ONLY HAVE TO MAKE IT TO THE SUN TO--
GREAT KRYPTON! A TRACTOR BEAM!
18

OKAY, LET'S FIGURE THIS OUT ONE STEP AT A TIME.
I'VE TRIED RESISTING HIS BEAMS BEFORE AND IT DOESN'T WORK.
BESIDES, I CAN FEEL THE PULL INCREASING. BRAINIAC'S USING ALL HIS POWER TO DRAG ME INSIDE.
HMMM. THAT JUST MAY BE IT!
HE'S FOCUSING ALL HIS ENERGIES ON ME... NONE OF HIS FORCE-SHIELDS!
FINE... SO I DON'T RESIST THE BEAM. IN FACT, I SPEED IN EVEN FASTER THAN HE WANTS.
SMASHING THROUGH HIS HULL --
--WHERE I CAN DISMANTLE HIM BEFORE HE CAN CAUSE ANY MORE HAVOC.
19


I NOW UNDERSTAND WHAT HE IS PLANNING. HIS MOVE IS COMPLETELY LOGICAL, YET I FAILED TO COMPUTE ITS POSSIBILITY.
SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH MY PROGRAMMING.
I WILL CONCERN MYSELF WITH THAT AFTER I RELEASE MY TRACTOR BEAM, REINSTATE MY FORCE-SHIELDS,
BEAUTIFUL! HE DID WHAT I'D HOPED HE'D DO!
NOW I'M FREE!
THE SUN AWAITS!
AND NOTHING'S GOING TO STOP ME NOW!
I STILL FAIL TO COMPUTE HIS PLAN.
WHAT DOES HE INTEND DOING INSIDE THE SUN?
THIS'LL ONLY WORK ONCE-- IF I FAIL, BRAINIAC WILL FIND SOME WAY TO COUNTER THIS APPROACH A SECOND TIME.
HAVE TO MOVE QUICKLY--COOL OFF ONE REGION OF THE SUN'S SURFACE...


...AND CREATE THE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC EFFECTS OF SUNSPOTS!
LOSING POWER... MEMORY LOSS BEGINNING.
VOIDS APPEARING IN MY ESSENTIAL PROGRAMMING.
REM: CALCULATE RAPIDITY OF ENERGY AND MEMORY LOSS.
IT'S WORKING... BRAINIAC'S KEELED OVER, AND HIS FORCE-FIELD IS FADING!
ALL I NEED IS ANOTHER FEW SECONDS AND BRAINIAC WILL BE REDUCED TO SPARE PARTS FOR A WASHING MACHINE.
MUST REACH CENTRAL CONSOLE CORTEX...
OVERRIDE NECESSARY...
...F... AD... I... NG...
UH OH... DON'T LIKE THIS, SOMEHOW HE'S GAINING STRENGTH TO REACH HIS CONTROL UNIT...
AND HIS BLASTED FORCE FIELD ISN'T WEAK ENOUGH TO SMASH THROUGH.
I ONLY HAVE SECONDS BEFORE--
21

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MEANWHILE...

I gotta tell you something . . . I'm havin' fun! Really! I mean how many grown-ups get to live out their childhood fantasies—and get paid for it? Not to mention, how many people can honestly claim to be having fun after working at the same job for thirty years? Only weirdos. So I'm a weirdo. But if you think I'm weird, you should see Marv Wolfman jumpin' up 'n' down like some kinda nut! "Hey Marv, what's happening? How come you jumpin' up 'n' down like some kinda nut?" "I'm happy is all! Paul (Levitz) just told me DC just signed the contracts that give us the comic book rights to **Star Trek**." "Yeah, so . . .?" "So we're gonna do a monthly comic and a special comic adaptation of Star Trek III"! And best of all I'm the Editor and Marty (Pasko) and Mike (Barr) are going to write the scripts for me." "Big deal. Another 'Trekkie' gone zonkers."

On the other hand, I'm weird for **Star Trek** myself, can't wait for the first issue. Wonder who's going to draw it? I'll ask Marv . . . "Hey, Marv! **Marv**! . . ." Too late. He beamed himself home.

Talking of contracts, we just completed negotiations with Charlton Comics which gives us the rights to most of their "Action Heroes"! At least that's what I called them when I created the line during my stint as Charlton's Executive Editor back in the sixties. I don't know how many of you go back that far but I was there when each of these characters was created. Heck, I was part of the creative process. I remember the energy and the fun of working with so many talented people to produce the likes of; **Captain Atom, Blue Beetle, Judomaster, The Question, Sarge Steel, Peacemaker, Son of Vulcan.** Anyway, these characters were the foundation of a very exciting, creative and formative time in my professional life and it's a big kick to have them back. Whatever we decide to do with these titles (our plans are tentative at this writing), I'm sure you'll enjoy them as much as I have.

Incidentally, if you have any ideas about DC's future use of these titles, I'm willing to listen. My only thought at this time is to use the original creative teams wherever possible. Nostalgia? Maybe. But **Steve Ditko** drawing **Blue Beetle** could be just as exciting as it was once upon a time . . . Boy, that's a lot to look forward to.

Onward . . .

Did you know that, 1. I goofed in last month's column. I watch "Nightwatch" in the early morning hours, not "Nightline". No such animal. You may not care but I suppose CBS does. 2. I goofed several columns ago in announcing the Maggin/Toth/Austin Superman-Batman Team-up would appear in the **DC Comics Presents Annual**. It's in the **Superman Annual**. 3. Weirdos tend to goof a lot. 4. We're planning a reprint line that I'm excited about! Generally, I think of reprints as being in a class with kissing your sister; something that one does out of obligation. Not these reprints! More on them in a future column. The business-types around here get nervous when I start gushing prematurely about pet projects.

Noteworthy

We've just changed the format of the "Superman" Sunday page. Distributed by The Tribune Company Syndicate, Inc., the new Superman Sunday is designed to expand readership beyond the traditional adventure fans to include the general Sunday-Funnies audience. Parents, as well as boys and girls, are invited to participate in an exciting series of puzzles and mazes; Superman Trivia; a reader write-in "Ask Superman" column and even nostalgia, via a feature that looks at Superman art of the past.

The Sunday 'Super' Special is written-by DC staffer Bob Rozakis and beautifully drawn by Jose Delbo and Sal Trapani (who also do a **smashing** job on the six-day a week dailies which are written by Paul Kupperberg). The new Sunday page has picked up many new papers, including the **New York Sunday News**. Dailies and the Sunday don't necessarily appear in the same papers and if one or both doesn't appear in your local paper, it may be because you haven't hounded the paper's Editor. While you think of it, why don't you drop him a note and "ask for it by name"?

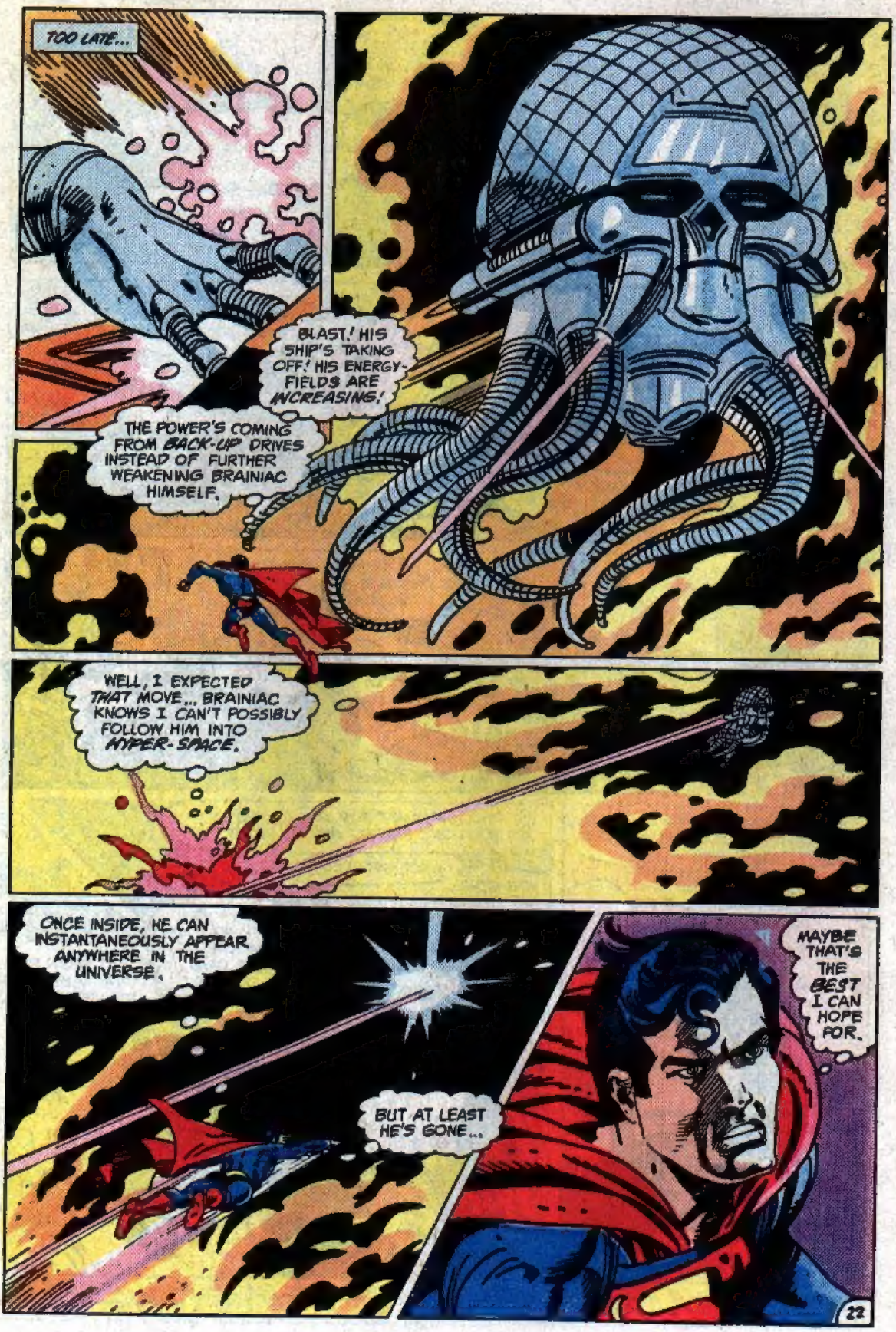
"**Thriller**" is coming! First real outing for relative newcomer Robert Loren Fleming and obviously a labor of love for artist Trevor Von Eeden. If you want an exciting change of pace in comic reading, this is the one to try in '83! Non-returnable outlets only, we'll be on sale with "**Thriller**" late in the year. Look for it.

Thank you and Good afternoon.

Dick

DC staffers and free-lancers alike were shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Frank Chiaramonte on January 28th. He died of cancer at age 40. DC and Marvel fans knew Frank best for his work as an inker, notably on Curt Swan's **Superman** pencils and Mike Ploog's **Werewolf By Night**. Most fans were less aware of his work on **P.S.** magazine, an illustrated monthly maintenance manual for the army which he did regularly since coming to this country from Cuba in 1967.

Frank brought a high level of professionalism, skill and dedication to his work and he was a quiet, yet personable, gentle man. He will be missed by those who knew and worked with him.


TOO LATE...
BLAST! HIS SHIP'S TAKING OFF! HIS ENERGY-FIELDS ARE INCREASING!
THE POWER'S COMING FROM BACK-UP DRIVES INSTEAD OF FURTHER WEAKENING BRAINIAC HIMSELF.
WELL, I EXPECTED THAT MOVE... BRAINIAC KNOWS I CAN'T POSSIBLY FOLLOW HIM INTO HYPER-SPACE.
ONCE INSIDE, HE CAN INSTANTANEOUSLY APPEAR ANYWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE.
BUT AT LEAST HE'S GONE...
MAYBE THAT'S THE BEST I CAN HOPE FOR.
22

STILL, I'LL HAVE TO INSTALL ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CIRCUITRY INTO MY SUPER-COMPUTER.
I WANT TO KNOW WHEN AND WHERE HIS NEXT ATTACK BEGINS.
I INTEND TO BE THERE, AND I INTEND TO STOP HIM--
AND SPEAKING OF STOPPING, HIS WARRIORS HAVE BEEN STOPPED, TOO.
GOOD GOING, WONDER WOMAN.
I'D LOVE TO TAKE THE CREDIT, BUT THEY JUST STOPPED FIGHTING.
BRAINIAC WAS CONTROLLING US... SUDDENLY WE FELT THAT CONTROL SLIP AWAY.
WE ARE FINALLY FREE.
I'LL FIND A PLANET FOR YOU TO LIVE ON, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.
WHAT HAPPENED TO BRAINIAC?
HE'S GONE... AND IT WILL TAKE AWHILE BEFORE HE CAN RESTORE HIS LOST MEMORY AND PROGRAMMING.
BUT I KNOW HIM--AND I ALSO KNOW ONE OF THESE DAYS HE'LL RETURN.
BUT WHEN HE DOES, WE'LL BE READY!
LET'S HOPE SO, WONDER WOMAN. LET'S JUST HOPE SO.
IN THE SEPTEMBER SUPERMAN AND ACTION: A TWO-PART BATTLE WITH A NEW VILLAIN, THE PLANETEER! ON SALE JUNE 9 AND 23! THAT'S TWO DATES!

DC COMICS, INC., 666 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10103

Dear Editor,

I have been an *ACTION* and *SUPERMAN* fan for a long time, but never so avid as in the past ten months.

The series in *ACTION* about *Superman*'s struggle with the evil Lord Satanis and his equally evil wife Syrena was by far the best I've ever read by Marv Wolfman. Marv is definitely a "superman" in his own right when it comes to keeping us fans glued to the pages of our comics. Each installment of this epic tale left us wanting more and anxiously awaiting the next issue. I would be interested to see what happened to Lord Satanis when he found himself confronting his wife after *Supes* sent him back to his own time.

Although I am a fan of Marv's in *ACTION*, I am equally fond of Cary Bates' work in *SUPERMAN*. Each month when I open my latest issue, I quickly turn to see who the scripter is. If it's MW or CB, I know instantly I am going to thoroughly enjoy the story. For instance, I just finished *ACTION* #542 and *SUPERMAN* #383 and couldn't wait to send this letter to thank both men for great stories. The current crossover between the two books is something that's been missing too long.

Also, I'd like to take this opportunity to praise yet another super-guy on the team: penciller Curt Swan. His art enhances every panel of *Superman*'s adventures and makes the story truly come alive. We not only see, but more importantly, feel *Superman*'s emotions.

And speaking of emotions, I have to say that my first reaction to the latest development in the *Superman*/Lois relationship was not good. I mean really, guys. For over 40 years it has been a well-known fact that these two were more than just fond of one another. Now you have Lois going off to other parts of the world to try to sort out her feelings and *Superman* left to deal with his. As I said, my first reaction was "Why change all this?" But now I realize that it will open up many more interesting possibilities.

Again I would like to thank Marv, Cary, Curt and everyone else who works on *ACTION* and *SUPERMAN* for bringing some very fine stories to us fans. Keep up the great work.

S.J. NAEHRBASS
2833 E. Marco Polo
Phoenix, AZ

And after that general overview review, let's get down to specifics... specifically ACTION #542!—BR

*****

Dear Editor:

"Savage Awakening" contained superb Curt Swan/Dave Hunt art and an(other) excellent script by Marv Wolfman. The cooling relationship between *Superman* and Lois has been anticipated, but still sensitively handled.

Even though, in the past, emotions and feelings have reached peaks and valleys like a roller coaster, periods of great intimacy to phases of almost indifference, this particular transition for *Superman* and Lois was portrayed with much insight and character. For example, *Superman* still clings to the argument that he is the protector of the world and the universe and this role takes top priority. Lois, on the other hand, argues that this point of view is no longer valid. In other words, Lois admittedly accepts these conditions; she accepted them the instant she fell in love with him. And yet *Superman*'s continued reluctance to allow their relationship to go further indicates a deeper, psychological hesitancy, perhaps a subconscious unwillingness to make a permanent commitment, to alter his life-style.

In any event, Mr. Wolfman's ability to inject originality and freshness into this 40+-year-old affair is certainly commendable.

Also, Vandal Savage's appearance was interesting. His decision to implement a long-term plot against *Superman* was logical and realistic, given the fact that he is immortal.

In all, this issue was thoughtful, insightful, and a joy to read.

DAVID MERCURY
Toledo, OH

*****

Dear People,

I've been a loyal *Superman* fan for nearly sixteen years and I've seen my favorite hero undergo many changes. *ACTION* #542 has a different feel to it than any story I've read before. It does live up to the billing as the "Beginning of a New Era" in *Superman*'s life.

The story seemed full of the kinds of problems *Superman*'s powers are useless against. His struggles with his responsibilities to the world and his commitments to those he cares for cause the Man of Steel to doubt himself. The conflicts make him more human.

I am anxiously awaiting the developments in *Superman*'s relationship with Lois. I believe they should have their ups and downs as all couples do, but please, please, please do not break them up. *Superman* with Lois is a very basic part of the legend, like his powers and his cape. They should remain together.

As for Lana's romantic interests in Clark, I'd rather she found someone else. I was never wild about the Lois/Lana rivalry. And what's wrong with Perry White? I have this feeling something big's about to happen to him.

You've certainly got me interested in what's going to happen next. Keep it up and thanks for all the fun.

JEFF SNYDER
2301 South Park St., #8
Madison, WI 53713

Without a doubt the change in the Superman/Lois relationship was the topic of conversation in most of this month's mail. So let's dig into a few of the comments, shall we?—BR

*****

Dear Julie,

Well, it's finally happened, has it? The world's most legendary couple has finally broken up. I hope that *Superman* and Lois will eventually get back together, but not immediately. They need time to consider their feelings for each other.

And what's this? Lana is putting the moves on Clark? If you ask me, Mr. Kent is an idiot for not seeing Lana as the gem she is.

FRED deBOOM
9372 Tidewater Cir.
Huntington Beach, CA 92646

.....Fans of *Superbaby* must be rejoicing over the return of the infant wonder in *ACTION* #542. It's interesting to see all the things you can do with the Tot of Steel and his little friends temporarily transformed into adults. Only *Superbaby* would smash his fist into a rock when things don't go his way. And I would have been annoyed had it been *Superman* who fell for a plan as obvious as Vandal Savage's. I don't think *Superbaby* would swear, though. ("Rao!" on page 12) I thought Ma and Pa Kent taught their adopted son better than that. And I can't forget baby Lois who showed the proper immaturity for her psychological age of two years.

But seriously, I really am disappointed that this is supposed to be an improvement. "An exciting new era in the life of

Superman"? I'd rather be seeing a new inker for Curt Swan and a new writer for *ACTION*.

JOHN WELLS
PO Box 119
Batavia, IA 52533

.....You're probably being flooded by letters criticizing Lois for her behavior in *ACTION* #542. Well, this isn't one of them. If anything, I think Lois was too kind to *Superman*.

Characteristically, he chose to end the conversation just when Lois was making an important point. He always seems to fly off suddenly or need to be alone as soon as Lois starts to say something he doesn't want to hear. Lois, on the other hand, had to hear the full "commitment to duty" speech.

However, I think what really hurts Lois is the fact that the man is cheating on her. Heaven forbid this issue should actually be settled, but I'm of the opinion that Lois is well aware of who Clark really is. As she said in #541, she sees things that Lana doesn't. So, if a month goes by—a month in which Clark and Lana are getting closer and *Superman* and Lois aren't—then obviously her relationship is in big trouble. It wouldn't do any good to confront Clark about his double identity; she's had more than enough experience to know he'd just deny it. But isn't it interesting that it is to Clark that Lois announces her waiting days for *Superman* are over?

Competing with two hundred billion planets is one thing, but competing with Lana Lang is another. Lana has always made Lois terribly insecure. Lana, after all, was *Superman's* childhood sweetheart and Lois can't compete with the past. The infamous Lois/Lana rivalry (which, like the Lois/Clark rivalry, always seemed to matter more to Lois) goes beyond, that, however. Lana can give the impression that everything she's wanted has simply fallen into her hands. For a person as ambitious and hardworking as Lois, that has got to hurt (especially since they've so often wanted the same things.)

As for Clark's reaction to Lois' departure—tell me he's joking. "It looks like *Superman* could use you now!" If that's true, why hasn't he turned to her sooner? Lois may say that he'll have to get along on his own, but knowing her I'm sure that if he showed up on her doorstep, she would have changed her plans. He's had plenty of time to turn to her and she's very much aware that he hasn't. He hardly has any justification for thinking he's been left in the lurch. As for "I don't know if I should be happy or jealous or—what": the woman he loves has just given up on him and left the country. How did "happy" make the acceptable list of emotions?

What's really fascinating is that Lois is unconsciously imitating Lana by leaving the country. When Lana gave up on *Superman*, she headed for Europe; now Lois is on her way to the Middle East. I only hope this doesn't mean she's being written out. She's a much more fascinating character than Lana Lang has ever been.

JEANNE WILLIAMS
3661 Mendon Pl.
Columbus, OH 43227

.....*Superman* and Lois' meeting of the minds was very interesting and despite the closeness these two have been experiencing lately, its coming to a head now is still quite logical. It really wasn't as drastic as I thought, but I'm sure there is plenty more to come.

KENT A. PHENIS
1321 N. Meridian St., Apt. 913
Indianapolis, IN 46202

.....*Superman* was really troubled with the break-up. On page 3, he hits the rocks with his fist as Lois drives off alone in her car. It was like he wished he could give it all up and commit to Lois.

DAVID PLASS
28 Marwood Drive
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

.....Aaarrrgghh!!!! Marv, how could you do this?? I am a) shocked, b) dismayed, c) heartsick, d) angry, e) all of the above!

My opinion of and respect for *Superman* has just dropped from about 99 9/10% to a -10%. His treatment of Lois shows stupidity, selfishness, immaturity, and shallowness. I'm being too rough on him? No way.

When faced with a problem concerning someone he supposedly loves, does he compromise / reason / bargain / debate / discuss? Noooo... he says, in effect, "Tough luck, babe!" I call that stupid.

Lois' statements to him on page 2 are right on the money. He says he loves her but cannot/will not commit. Cripes, dummy, what else *is* genuine love *but* commitment? There is no true love without commitment, but since he seems to want the pleasures of Lois' honest love without the attendant responsibilities, I call that selfish! He hides from the issues with a "Can I take you home?" and then takes out his frustrations on the boulders. That's immaturity!

Finally, the calendar on page 7. He splits up with Lois on the 6th and starts dating Lana on the 15th, eh? Sure didn't waste much time in mourning, did he? That and his "I guess he will at that!" comment on page 17 seem awfully pat. I call that shallow. And his comment, "I never thought I'd see the day Lois would leave *Superman* in the lurch"... that's funny—I guess he's not counting all the broken dates mentioned by Lois on page 1. Isn't it amazing how blind some folks can be at their own shortcomings?

"Wake up, *Supes*, and smell the coffee," as Ann Landers would say. Go to a shrink, get your head on straight... maybe then you'll be worthy of the love of someone of Lois' caliber. It's obvious you're not at this time!

SUZANNE JONES
703 NW 60th, Apt. B
Kansas City, MO 64118

.....I can easily see Lois' point, but that first panel on page 3 was great. Boy, would I like to be able to let out my frustrations like that!

WM DECKER
1114 Water
Eaton Rapids, MI 48827

.....I realize that the break-up is the best for all concerned. Sure, Lois and *Superman* are in love, but an occasional date here and there, with *Supes* rushing off somewhere in the middle to prevent a dire catastrophe does not a relationship make. I'm glad you realized this was going nowhere and left little opportunity for the twosome to grow as people.

CRAIG HOPPING
60 Gregory Dr.
Kenvil, NJ 07847

.....This new era of *Superman* adventures has taken a bad start. Lois just couldn't understand why *Superman* can't commit himself to her!

DELMO WALTERS JR.
1289 Grand Concourse
Bronx, NY 10452

.....The breaking up of *Superman* and Lois is a step in the right direction. Another such step is the relationship between Clark and Lana. As long as Lana doesn't start trying to prove Clark is *Superman*, I'll be happy.

KEVIN T. BROWN
7846F W. Lawrence Ave.
Norridge, IL 60656

.....I don't object to Lois leaving *Superman*—at least as long as it's not permanent. So long as you don't kill Lois off, you can always bring her back!

AL SCHROEDER III
#E208, 111 Acklen Park Dr.
Nashville, TN 37203

.....I really don't think that breaking up is what either of them wanted, but what each of them wanted was so complex that splitting seemed fairer than the asking. For one of the few times I felt greater sorrow for Lois because she really doesn't possess all the information necessary to fully understand *Superman*.

WALLACE LEE HOPKINS
Box 428
Glen Carbon, IL 62034

Be with us next issue for more excitement, more developments... and more letters!—Bob Rozakis